

**Abstract of the Invention**

Methods and apparatus for protecting against and/or responding to an overload condition at a node ("victim") in a distributed network divert traffic otherwise destined for the victim to one or more other nodes, which can filter the diverted traffic, passing a portion of it to the victim, and/or effect processing of one or more of the diverted packets on behalf of the victim. .

Diversion can be performed by one or more nodes (collectively, a "first set" of nodes) external to the victim. Filtering and/or effecting traffic processing can be performed by one or more nodes (collectively, a "second set" of nodes) also external to the victim. Those first and second sets can have zero, one or more nodes in common -- or, put another way, they may wholly, partially or not overlap. The methods and apparatus have application in protecting nodes in a distributed network, such as the Internet, against distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks.

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